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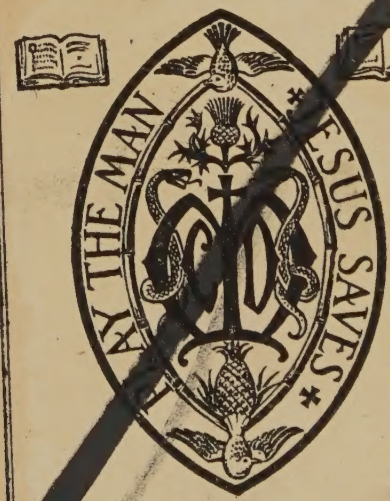

REV. CHARLES D. MARTIN, D.D.

CHRISTIANITY AS RELIGION AND LIFE

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CHRISTIANITY AS RELIGION AND LIFE

BY THE REV.

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CONIUGI DILECTISSIMAE

FOREWORD

THE lectures composing this little book were delivered in March of this year, in Pine Hill Presbyterian College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, on the Pollok Memorial Foundation.

In giving them now to a wider circle, the author desires to acknowledge once more his sense of the high honour bestowed on him by the Senate of Pine Hill College in appointing him to this Lectureship, and thus connecting his name in any degree with that of the distinguished and venerable ex-Principal of that Institution. The hospitable kindness accorded him by the Principal and Professors, as well as the characteristic generosity of his reception by all with whom he had the privilege of associating in a brief visit to the New Land, will always be one of his happiest and most grateful memories.

HILLSIDE, MONTROSE,
May 1914.

CONTENTS

LECTURE I

PAGE

RELIGIONS AND RELIGION; OR, WHAT IS RELIGION? 1

LECTURE II

RELIGION AND SIN 23

LECTURE III

SIN AND THE ATONEMENT 45

LECTURE IV

THE ATONEMENT AND LIFE IN THE RISEN CHRIST 75

LECTURE I

RELIGIONS AND RELIGION; OR, WHAT IS RELIGION?

LECTURE I

RELIGIONS AND RELIGION; OR, WHAT IS RELIGION?

Of all the intellectual tasks confronting the Church to-day, at this the beginning of the twentieth century, none is more urgent or more insistent than that of maintaining with conviction and reason that Christianity is the final and absolute religion, that there is none other name wherein a sinful world can be saved than the Name of Jesus, the Man of Nazareth and the Christ of God. A new science — new, at least, in emphasis — the science of Comparative Religion, the comparative study of the religions of the world, has pressed this task upon us. The discovery in other religions, more particularly in the higher of them, of religious conceptions or ideas of a high order, and of moral precepts of lofty tone not unworthy to

be compared with those of Christianity itself, has challenged afresh the claim of the Christian religion to be not only the highest that has yet appeared in religious history but the highest that can ever appear, God's last word to man for his salvation. It is this claim that is at the root of the Christian missionary enterprise. This is why Christianity not only presents itself to each of us in this country, whatever our condition or estate, with the great central invitation of the Master, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest," but why in the very essence of it is involved the command, "Go" into all the world, to every race and every tribe, to every caste and every colour, "and make disciples of all the nations."

Now the first condition of realising aright how Christianity can make this claim, and wherein consists the absoluteness or finality of the Christian religion, is to understand just what Religion is, and what needs of the human spirit it claims to satisfy. So the subject of this opening lecture is Religions and Religion; or, What is Religion?

Or, What is Religion?

Christianity is one form or manifestation of the religious consciousness. We Christians believe it to be the highest and purest form the world has known, or can ever know, the final or absolute form. But it is not the only religion in the world. So far from this being so, there is no race or people of whom we know anything, however low in the scale of civilisation, but has some kind of religion. This has not, indeed, always been believed to be the case. Some early European travellers had been inclined to maintain that they had, in the course of their wanderings, come upon a primitive people here or there wholly destitute of anything that could truly be called religion. Such was asserted to be the case, for example, with the aborigines of Australia and the natives of certain parts of Western Africa. But fuller knowledge of, and deeper acquaintance with, these tribes or peoples has led to the abandonment of this position. This earlier view, it is now recognised, was due to either of two influences, or to both operating together. Either, travellers had

gone to those primitive peoples with their own preconceptions of the forms and practices in which religion should manifest itself, and, not finding these forms or practices, they concluded to the absence in those peoples of anything corresponding to the religious consciousness or spirit. They failed to detect the religion of the savage or uncivilised people under unfamiliar forms and practices. Or, where that was not the reason, the view was based on an insufficient and superficial acquaintance with the tribes or peoples in question. Primitive uncivilised peoples are found to be very suspicious of strangers, and jealously conceal from them as far as they can that which they look upon as their most private and sacred possession. The result is that the traveller may come to know much of the ordinary life of a tribe, while he remains completely ignorant of their religion. It is often only after long residence among them, when he has won their true confidence, that they disclose to a stranger their deepest and most cherished beliefs and aspirations.

It is now, however, one of the most

assured results of scientific research—one of the great services which anthropology and the comparative study of different peoples has done the world — that religion represents a universal and abiding need of the human spirit, normal to man as such;[1] that "mankind is incurably religious," so that, wherever we find man, there we find some form of the religious consciousness. This is what is meant by saying that "religion is a universal phenomenon." What, then, is this thing which is thus universal, this thing of which we find traces in the history of every nation and every race? This is the question which we ask ourselves in this first lecture.

In attempting to answer this question, let us begin by clearing the ground and pointing out some things which Religion is not.

First, Religion is not merely the acceptance of certain beliefs, or the profession of a certain

[1] The religious sceptic is a human abnormality. Cp. F. R. Tennant in *Expositor*, October 1913, p. 353: "Religion . . . expresses an abiding and practically universal propensity, apparently normal to man as man until he becomes sufficiently sophisticated to become sceptical."

creed. This is theology rather than religion, and theology bears the same relation to religion as botany to plants, or astronomy to the stars. Botany is the science of plants, and astronomy is the science of the stars. In like manner, theology is the science of religion, the scientific formulation of religion in terms of the thought of the age. This is later in time than religion, it comes after it and is in arrear of it, as reflective thought is always in arrear of life. This relation of reflective systematised thought to life was expressed by Hegel in memorable words. "When philosophy paints its grey in grey," he said, "some one shape of life has meanwhile grown old ; and grey in grey, though it brings it into knowledge, cannot make it young again. The owl of Minerva does not start upon its flight until the evening twilight has begun to fall." So theology is always behind religion. Religion began before theology, and survives all the changes of changing theories.

Second, Religion is not merely the observance of certain outward acts of worship. This

is what is called "cultus," the performing of certain outward rites or ordinances, the going to church, for example, and participating in a certain ritual of worship, what Ruskin called "the dramatic Christianity of the organ and the aisle." This is but the outward manifestation or expression of religion, a manifestation or expression which varies among peoples and individuals according to the level or stage of culture at which they happen to be. But to identify these outward forms with religion is to degrade religion into a routine of mechanical performances which, sooner or later, becomes a burden and a cruel bondage. So it had become in the hands of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. And He came to men with His great emancipating call, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." Come away from these wearisome performances, which are not religion. "Come unto Me. My yoke is easy and My burden is light."[1]

Neither of these two things, then, is what Religion, in its essence, is. It is not the ac-

[1] Matt. xi. 28–30.

ceptance of certain beliefs, and it is not the observance of certain outward ordinances. And one other thing we may note that it is not.

Third, Religion is not morality, or ethical conduct. Matthew Arnold, in his *Literature and Dogma*, defined religion as simply "morality touched with emotion." And it is often said that morality, virtuous conduct, is all the religion any man needs to have. There is a tendency abroad to-day in many quarters to ignore the claim of religion on the soul, and to think that, so long as a man is moral or virtuous in his conduct and character, it does not matter whether he be religious or no. But religion is not morality—not morality even when "touched with emotion." Religion is indeed intended to produce morality, and perfect morality is impossible apart from religion. However high and fine a man's character be, it would certainly be refined to a higher standard, and raised to a higher level, by religion. Morality and religion, therefore, are very intimately connected. But with all that, they are distinct. They represent

different movements or potencies of the human spirit.

If then Religion is not any of these things, what is it? In approaching a positive answer, let us take the guidance of the word itself. "Religion" is built up from two Latin words which together mean "binding back" (*re-*, back; *ligāre*, to bind). And the idea behind the word may be expressed in Biblical language thus. In the first chapter of Genesis we have a description given—not a scientific, but a religious, description—of the process of creation. "In the beginning God." The opening words of the Bible take us back, and up, to the thought of God conceiving the idea of forming a world at all. And the first chapter goes on to give us an account of the stages, or links in the chain, of the process of creation—what science calls "evolution." This process, as every ordered rational process among ourselves, must have had an adequate end or aim, a "final cause" or sufficient reason, for which the whole has been brought into being. What this final cause in the Divine

mind was, we are told. "Let us make man in our own image," a being, that is to say, with understanding and reason and affection and will. This was the great motive or object, and the only adequate motive or object, of making a world at all—namely, the bringing into being of a world of moral persons, who by the exercise of their own free self-determined choice could "bind back" the whole chain to the First Cause. This is the end or aim, the chief end or aim, of the whole process—the binding back of the chain to God Himself. This is "the last for which the first was made." And this is just what Religion is. It is the "binding back" of the whole chain of creation to God Himself, through the human spirit coming into free loving fellowship with the Divine, that fellowship in which alone human nature can come to true and perfect development, to life for man as God meant it to be. Life in fellowship with the Divine—this is Religion, the very essence of it, wherever found. The highest manifestation or expression of this fellowship is that which we have in the

Christian religion, which has been defined by the eminent German theologian Lipsius as "a fellowship of love and life with God (through Christ)."[1] It is in this highest expression or manifestation of the religious consciousness in history that we see most truly what religion is, as the true nature of a thing is seen in its end or τέλος, not in its first rude beginnings. But everywhere and always, even at its lowest, Religion is essentially the attempt on man's part to come into fellowship with the Divine, with a Power or Powers higher and mightier than himself, supersensible, superhuman, or supernatural, on whom or on which he feels himself dependent.

How the religious impulse arose, how it was awakened in primitive man, how man was moved at the first to attempt to come into such fellowship—that is another question, a question for what is called the Psychology of Religion. And into that question we cannot now enter. Suffice it, for the present purpose, to say that the main

[1] "eine Liebes- und Lebensgemeinschaft mit Gott," *Dogmatik*, p. 690.

factor in awakening the religious impulse was not speculative but practical. It is not primarily an intellectual craving or need that man seeks to satisfy in his religion. It is not an explanation of the world, a theoretical interest in causes that motives it; it is a practical necessity, what psychologists call "a conative vital impulse." What man is concerned about in religion is, fundamentally, the protection of, and provision for, his practical needs. To secure these, in his frailty and weakness, he seeks the aid of powers higher than his own, supersensible and superhuman, which he conceives as controlling the world and determining his own life. Professor James puts it thus: "The permanent root of religion is the need of an adequate *socius*."[1] The religious impulse, that is to say, is an impulse of the whole human personality or spirit—in Biblical language, of the "heart," and not merely of the intellect—to come into alliance or fellowship with a Divine Being or Beings who can deliver him from evil and make him the possessor of

[1] *Principles of Psychology*, i. 316.

good. What the evil or the good is conceived as being, what the precise practical need which religion is looked upon as satisfying, this depends on the stage of religious development reached at any particular time. In the earlier stages of development man is primarily concerned about meeting his bodily wants. What he seeks chiefly, if not solely, is material goods. As his social relations develop and his moral conscience advances, deeper needs come to be recognised, moral and not merely material. But whatever they are, these practical needs, man recognises, about him and above him, a Power or Powers greater than his own, who can advance or hinder his good; and what he seeks to do in religion is to enter into such relations with this supersensible, superhuman, supernatural Power or Powers as will avert their displeasure or secure their favour.[1]

[1] Buddhism, with its rejection of the traditional Gods of India, and its absence of any specific teaching about the Divine, might seem an exception to the statement made above. But this very rejection was made in the interests of a truly religious craving, the craving for "salvation." And how impossible it is for the human spirit to deny

The religious impulse or instinct, then, with this practical necessity as its root, is, as we have seen, universal. Everywhere and always, wherever man is found, we see him seeking after fellowship with the Divine, seeking after God if haply he might find Him, in this divine fellowship to be delivered from evil and made the possessor of good. The best religion will be that which most adequately or perfectly secures this fellowship or communion. Why we say this religion is Christianity, why we say, indeed, that Christianity is the perfect and final religion, inasmuch as it secures for man that communion with God which alone is perfect or adequate, and why therefore it is destined to be the universal religion—this we shall see in a subsequent lecture.

But meanwhile, in the concluding part of this opening lecture, let us bring to the test of our definition certain current representa-

the religious instinct for fellowship with a superhuman, supernatural Power or Powers, is shown by the later developments of Buddhism, where the man Buddha becomes for his followers a supernatural being.

tions, or rather misrepresentations, of religion. If religion is fundamentally and essentially this life in fellowship with God, have we not to revise some common conceptions of it?

First, If religion is what we have seen it to be, then it is no mere accessory or appendage to life, a sort of additional accomplishment, like music or painting, something which we may be the better of having, but which we can get along quite well without. It is not an "extra" or added something; it is an ineradicable necessity of our nature, the supreme and deepest necessity of man everywhere and always, for it is the very essence of life for man as God meant him to be. As Browning puts it in "Sludge the Medium":

> "Religion's all or nothing;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> No quality of the finelier tempered clay
> Like its whiteness or its lightness; rather
> Stuff o' the very stuff, life of life, and self of self."

Second, If religion is what we have seen it to be, then it is not to be thought of as a

restriction or burden in life. How often it is thought of so! Probably there is nothing that contributes more to deterring young men and women from religion than the conceiving of it in this fashion as a kind of restriction or limitation, the pushing in of the stops, and the shutting off of the full rich music of life. In the opening verses of Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven* we have a memorable expression, and confession, of this misconception of religion:

"I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

. . . . . .

For, though I knew His love Who followed,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside."

And this misconception of religion is aided or fostered by the religious life being often too much represented as consisting merely in keeping clear of this sin and that, of this weakness and that; which is, as some one has

said, very much the same as thinking of a garden as a place kept clear of weeds. But if religion is what we have shown it to be, then, so far from being such a negative thing, a restriction or burden, or even a bond merely to keep us from certain courses, it is the very fulfilment of life. Religion takes our entire nature and employs its every faculty according to the divine intention, by bringing us into that fellowship for which we were created. And, as such, the truly religious life is the alone full, triumphant, victorious, flowering life.

Third, Religion, as the life of fellowship with God, is not to be conceived of as a mere temporary expedient or refuge, to which we may be compelled to resort some day as a man may be driven to enter a hospital. So it is conceived of, for example, when it is looked upon as merely a way of escape from future punishment, something, therefore, that we should make sure of before we die. This is to look upon it too much as an accidental, even foreign or alien, element in life, whereas religion is the true forma-

tive force of life. It is the doorway, the only doorway, into true and worthy existence. It is life indeed. That is its definition. As Jesus Himself said, describing His business or vocation in this world: "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."[1]

So then, if any one asks, Why be religious? there are two great and simple reasons that may be given.

First, We should be religious, because we are made for it, made for the "binding back" of our life to God, made by the very make and mould of our being for fellowship with the Divine, as truly as the fish is made for the water or the bird for the air. If we miss this, whatever else we may gain in life, we miss the chief end or aim of our being. For, in the words of our Scottish Shorter Catechism, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever" (Ans. 1).

Second, We should be religious, because, apart from this, not only do we miss the chief end or aim of our own being, but we make

[1] John x. 10.

God miss the chief end and aim of His working—His working first in creation and then in redemption. And this is even more culpable. To do the former, to defeat the main purpose of our own life, that is foolishness, the very essence of foolishness. To do the latter, to defeat God's purpose for us, both in creation and in redemption, that is sin, the very essence of sin and of guilt.

LECTURE II

RELIGION AND SIN

LECTURE II

RELIGION AND SIN

In our first lecture we were considering what Religion is. We saw that, essentially, it is the craving of the human spirit for fellowship with the Divine, a craving which is universal. Wherever man is found, even in the lowest or most uncivilised condition, there the deepest thing in him is the attempt to come into practical communion or fellowship with a Power or Powers mightier than himself, on whom or on which he feels himself dependent. This is the evidence of history and experience, that "God hath set eternity in the heart," that man is made by the very make and mould of his being for God, and that therefore—it is a case of necessary sequence or consequence as unfailing and universal as any other—he cannot rest until he rest in Him. If we miss this, we miss the chief end of our

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own being. More than that, we defeat the great end and aim of God's working in the whole evolutionary process. For this, as we have seen, is nothing less than fellowship between the human spirit and the Divine, and through it the "binding back" of the whole chain to God Himself.

Now the forms in which this feeling after God manifests itself, and the ways in which man seeks to attain this fellowship, have been, and are, many and various. But, amid all variety and manifoldness, they agree in one thing, and that is this, that in every religion, with indeed one notable and significant exception—that of Mohammedanism, sacrifice has a place. Wherever we find religion at all, wherever we find man attempting to come into practical fellowship with the Divine—and, as we have seen, we find that everywhere—there we find man coming before his God or Gods, not empty-handed, not with his prayers or petitions only, but with some sacrifice or offering that he thinks can recommend him to the higher powers. In the lower, or more primitive, religions the

dominant idea behind the bringing of sacrifice seems, in general, to be the recognition by man of his dependence on the Divine, and the expression of his gratitude to Him (or to Them) for the good gifts of life—at this stage conceived of chiefly, if not solely, as material blessings,—this combined with an anticipatory preparing the way for favours still to come. So men come bringing material gifts or offerings, the first-fruits of the earth or of the stall. The Basutos in Central Africa, for example, as missionaries tell us, come before their gods with their first-fruits, saying: "Thank you, gods, give us bread to-morrow also."[1] But as the moral consciousness develops, and man's conception of his God or Gods becomes more moral or spiritual, and with it the sense of something wrong in the moral and spiritual relationships of his life grows within him, the dominant idea of sacrifice seems to be, not merely the recognition of dependence and the expression of gratitude, but the endeavour to make

[1] See MacCulloch's *Comparative Theology*, p. 163.

reconciliation or atonement with the Divine for this "something wrong" in his life, whatever he may conceive the nature of this wrong to be. The great aim of sacrifice now is to appease his God or Gods, to turn away their anger or displeasure, and secure again their favour. And so we find him coming no longer merely, or chiefly, with offerings of food or meat as a thank-offering, but above all with sacrifices of blood, as in some sense a guilt-offering, the blood of animals, or of human beings, sometimes even of his own offspring, the idea being that the costlier the sacrifice the more thoroughly the favour of his God or Gods will be won, or the more completely their anger will be turned away. Whatever the sacrifice of blood may be, whether of animals or of human beings, the sacrifice is looked upon as, in some sense, vicarious. The life of the animal or human being is given for, or instead of, that of the guilty worshipper. By the innocent suffering of another, whether animal or man, atonement or expiation is made, and the Divine anger

or wrath averted.[1] The highest expression of this sense of the need of a vicarious atoning, or expiatory, sacrifice we have in the history of Israel, just because it is there we have the clearest or most adequate realisation of the spirituality and holiness of God. But we have the same need expressing itself in other religions, if in a lesser degree. Indeed, it is true to say that in the measure in which the moral perception or moral sense of a people or individual becomes true or worthy, in that measure the need for such expiatory or atoning sacrifice becomes the more felt.

Now, inasmuch as the true nature of a thing is seen not in its rudimentary or imperfect beginnings but in its highest manifestation or expression, the deepest and truest meaning of the universal practice of sacrifice, however this may often be very imperfectly realised, appears to be man's felt

[1] Cf. MacCulloch, *op. cit.* p. 168: "The worshipper sets some creature in his place by whose sufferings and death he is punished by proxy, and his guilt is pardoned. This idea is exactly expressed in the Greek word ἀντίψυχος, 'given for a life.'"

need of making atonement or expiation for the "something wrong" in his life, the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be. And thus we are led to view the practical universality of sacrifice as, in its deepest significance, a witness,—sometimes unconsciously, it is true, as in the lowest forms of the religious consciousness, and sometimes, even in the higher forms, dim and obscure—but a witness to man's feeling of something in his life that disturbs his proper relation to his God or Gods, something that involves guilt or responsibility on his part—what in the higher religions is called "sin"—and for which, therefore, some kind of atonement or expiation is demanded.[1]

What, then—this is the question to which we are led, and which we are to attempt to answer in this lecture—what is this fact of sin, with the feeling of guilty responsibility attached, to which all religions in their

[1] Cp. Tertullian's argument in his treatise, *The Witness of the Soul by Nature Christian*, where he points to the religious beliefs and practices of the pagan world as an unconscious witness to the truth of Christianity.

measure bear witness, and the more the higher or worthier they are?

Now, what we have already said shows us, to begin with, that this thing called "sin" is felt universally to be something between us and the unseen Power or Powers on whom we feel ourselves dependent, something, that is to say, in our relationship to God. This it is needful to point out at the beginning, for it at once rules out certain conceptions of sin as, at least, inadequate. Sin is not merely a wrong against ourselves, something that corrupts the nature and defies the law of man's being. That is moral vice. Nor is it merely a wrong against others, something that introduces a disturbing element into social and national life. That is crime. It is this view of sin as a wrong against others that is at the root of the definition of sin as "selfishness." A considerable truth there is in that definition, as we shall see, but by itself alone it is insufficient or inadequate, just because it thinks of sin as merely a man-regarding thing. It leaves the God-relationship out. But sin

is something that, in its inmost essence, first and foremost and deepest involves a wrong attitude, not merely to ourselves or to other men, but to God. "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight."[1] That is how the Psalmist viewed sin, and it is only when so viewed that its true nature is seen. Sin is a fact against God.

In coming more closely to the question of the nature of sin, let us begin, as in the previous lecture, by ruling out certain current representations or misrepresentations of it. To-day there are many attempts from different sides to conceive of sin lightly. These different attempts resolve themselves, in the last analysis, into different ways of making sin a part of the nature of things, involved somehow in the very make of the world or of human life. Sometimes, for example, it is held—and this is of the nature of what are called pantheistic theories of the universe—that it is only our human finite point of view that lends the appearance of evil to what we call sin. Could we see the

[1] Ps. li. 4.

whole as God sees it, we should see that evil and sin are mere illusion. What seems to us evil when viewed apart, and by itself, as it is from our limited standpoint, did we see it truly and in its relations, would be seen to be necessary to the great whole. Just as in a picture we must have the dark shades as well as the light,—both being necessary in their place,—so in the moral universe what we call "good" and what we call "evil" are alike needful or necessary. It is only through the contrast with evil that good can be known and appreciated. Sin, that is to say, is a "relative," the outcome of our finite point of view, the result of seeing only the part out of its relation to the whole. It comes of our ignorance.

Or, if anything more than this is admitted in sin, it is conceived and spoken of, as, *e.g.*, in what is called "the New Theology," as represented in England in different ways by Sir Oliver Lodge, the distinguished Principal of Birmingham University, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell of the City Temple, London, as being at most merely "negative," a "not-

being," a defect and nothing more, the absence of good, or an undeveloped form of it. "Good is being," says Campbell, "and evil is not-being."[1] "The contrast between good and evil," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "can be well illustrated by the contrast between heat and cold."[2] As cold is the absence of heat, "non-heat," so evil is the absence of good, "non-good." It is a "not-being," while good is positive being.

Now what we feel about these two views of sin is, that they are the result of coming to the facts with certain philosophical presuppositions or assumptions about God and the universe, and moulding the facts to suit the presuppositions, rather than of the endeavour to face straight to the facts themselves in the resolve to do right by them as facts of experience and history. Neither view does right by the witness of the universal moral consciousness. To say, for example, that sin within me, in its various forms, is merely "negative," a "non-being,"

[1] *The New Theology*, p. 44.

[2] *Substance of Faith allied with Science*, p. 98.

or "non-existent," is the sheerest playing with the facts of life. Sin as a fact of experience is something tragically real and positive. The bad in me, tested by all the available tests of reality, is as real, as existent, as the good. Indeed, it is always in danger of becoming more real. And so, as a recent incisive writer puts it, "If any philosophy says sin is a 'non-existent,' that is a saying illuminative not of sin but only of the philosophy which is so far out of touch with life as to say it."[1]

Not to dwell longer for the present, however, on these more philosophical views of sin, let us come to what is the chief attempt to-day to make light of sin by making it part of the nature of things, something natural, normal and necessary, involved in the very make of God's world—that, namely, which comes, not from the side of philosophy, but from the side of science and the scientific doctrine of evolution. From this side, sin is accounted for or explained by reference to man's inherited physical nature. Man—such is the re-

[1] Carnegie Simpson in *The Facts of Life*, p. 90.

presentation—has come up through a long animal past. His physical or organic nature has been evolved from that of the lower animals. And in each of us the animal appetites and impulses, thus evolved and then inherited from generation to generation, —the remains of "the tiger and the ape" in us,—have got the start of the higher powers of the conscience and the will. The result is, that when the conscience awakes and the will comes to be exercised, and what we call moral development proper begins, these appetites and impulses are already in possession. As a strenuous advocate of this view puts it: "The moral race of life is a race in which every child starts handicapped," for "when will and conscience enter, it is a land already occupied by a powerful foe." The fact of sin, that is to say, is looked upon as involved in the very nature of our physical descent. It is the natural and necessary outcome of the way in which we have developed. What theologians call "sin" is simply the inevitable result of the brute ancestry which we are destined to throw off in this upward

progress. Progress for man means, as Tennyson has it in *In Memoriam* :

> "Moving upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die."

So Matthew Arnold has declared sin to be "not a monster but an infirmity," a weakness pretty much like imperfect physical eyesight, a matter of inherited constitution, a matter of heredity or of that modified by environment. This, it is evident, equally with the previous views, is to cast the blame for man's sin on the natural make of things, and that means on God Himself. If this is the true account of sin, no wonder Sir Oliver Lodge says that "the higher man of to-day"—the man who understands the "how" and "why" of things—"is not worrying about sin." Why should he, if he is not to blame for it?

Can we, however, escape so lightly? To begin with, as showing, at least, the inadequacy or insufficiency of this account of the origination of sin, it might be pointed out that some of man's sins, and these his most

characteristic ones, do not arise out of the animal nature at all. Doubtless many forms of sin are of a physical character, the outcome of our bodily passions and impulses, but what of envy and hatred and pride, to mention but a few of the sins pertaining to the rational side of our nature. These are not to be explained merely by relation to our physical or organic constitution. Such sins could be committed, it would seem, just as well by a disembodied spirit. But not to dwell on that, let it be noted that even as regards sins connected with the animal nature, these, as even scientists themselves are increasingly coming to acknowledge, are not the necessary outcome of our inherited physical nature or constitution, or of that as modified by environment. The place of heredity, and of circumstances outside us, in determining the conditions of our life and the circumstances of temptation—that cannot be denied. It is the necessary result of the solidarity of the race. Our ancestry and environment create the conditions in which we have to fight our fight. They determine the circumstances in

which, or the channels along which, temptation comes to each of us, but they do not determine what the outcome of the fight with temptation shall be. They provide the ground or battlefield of temptation, they do not condition the issue. It is one thing to be tempted—circumstances and conditions so far outside of ourselves determine that ; it is another thing, something more, to sin. And it is the universal testimony of the unsophisticated moral conscience that for that something more we ourselves are culpable. It is something to which, in the very nature of the case, guilt attaches. And this sense of guilty responsibility—which, as we have seen, is borne witness to by the presence of sacrifice in religion, and more especially by the nature of the sacrifice demanded in the higher or more worthy forms of the religious consciousness—is a fact which demands a rational explanation as much as any other scientific fact. Now, if sin were merely the natural imperfection of an incomplete development, this sense of guilty responsibility on our part would be

an irrational fact, for, as Erasmus long ago put it, "We would have no more reason to lament that we are sinful than a horse that he is ignorant of grammar." No, the seat and source of sin lies not in our inherited bodily nature in the way represented. It lies deeper, even in the depths of that self-conscious moral personality or will which is our very self. This moral personality, with the power of choice, "the dread gift" of free will as Dante called it, we saw to be the highest outcome and chief aim of the whole evolutionary process, a being made "in the image of God" with power to bind back the end of the chain, through the free response or concurrence of his own will with the Divine purpose. Man was made for this, the world was made for this, as the highest end and aim; and man's nature is in its right estate, or in its true element, only when it is in a condition of self-willed relatedness to, or fellowship with, God. But man has failed to fulfil this end. He has defeated God's purpose by a misuse of his power of choice or free will. Made "in the

image of God," to bind back the whole process to Him through a free-willed fellowship, man has chosen self rather than God, and has substituted a life-for-self for a life-for-God. He has rebelled against the will and purpose of God, and the end of the chain, which was meant to be bound back to Him, has swung loose. And through this wilfulness or rebellion, through this disloyalty to God, there has come the great "fall" from God's purpose —the fact represented pictorially or allegorically in the Old Testament in the story of the Fall in Gen. iii., and in the New Testament in the Parable of the Prodigal Son in St. Luke xv. Through this "fall" or "revolt" (*defectio* as Augustine called it) man defeated not only the end of his own being, but the end and aim of God's whole evolutionary working. So that sin may be truly described as an anti-evolutionary fact, and in that sense an anti-natural fact,—the one anti-natural fact, indeed, the one alien or lawless element, in God's world. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4). Its very definition is that it ought not to be. So far from being

merely negative, it is something tragically and heinously positive, so positive that it is "deicide," rebellion against God. And what we see practically everywhere in religious history, as has already been pointed out, is man under the sense of guilty responsibility for this awful fact, attempting to knit up the rupture, to overcome the cleft, and by expiation and sacrifice bring himself back into the great fellowship.

The fundamental proclamation of the Christian religion is that what man in all ages and races and conditions has been in his own strength attempting to do, by torture and self-laceration and sacrifice, but attempting in vain, God in His infinite love and grace has done. It is this which makes the difference between Christianity and other religions not one of degree merely, but of kind —of a kind too that constitutes an absolute difference, and makes Christianity the final and perfect religion. The history of other religions is the history of man's attempt to reconcile himself to God. The central assertion or affirmation of the Christian

religion is that the means of reconciliation has come, not from man's side, but from God's ; that He, the very God against whom we have sinned, in the amazing wonder of His love has provided the Atonement, so that the gospel is first and foremost "the word of reconciliation." How He has done this, we shall consider in our next lecture. But meanwhile, let us note this fact, as a striking witness from experience and history to the efficacy of what He has done, that wherever the Christian Gospel is preached and believed in there we find men ceasing to bring offerings or sacrifices of blood by way of atonement or expiation. The need, they have come to realise, has been met. The atonement has been provided. The barrier has been removed, the rupture has been knit up, not from man's side but from God's, and done so finally and efficaciously that no works of merit on our side can add to it, or no life of demerit on our side can take away from it.

LECTURE III

SIN AND THE ATONEMENT

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In our last lecture we saw that sin, fundamentally and essentially, is the introducing of a great cleft or rupture into God's world through the misuse of what has been called "the dread gift" of free will, with which man was endowed for the supreme purpose of coming into free self-determined fellowship with God, and thus binding back the whole creative process to its great Fontal Source and Cause. Religious history everywhere, outside Christianity, shows us man under the sense of guilty responsibility for this fatal "fall" from God's purpose and rebellion against His will, attempting to knit up the rupture and overcome the cleft, and so bring himself back into the great fellowship.

Now the foundational proclamation of the Christian religion is, that what man in all ages

and races and conditions has been, and is, attempting by propitiation and sacrifice and self-torture, but attempting in vain, to do, God Himself in His infinite love and grace has done, and done once for all. In the wonder of His seeking and redeeming love, He — the very God against whom we have sinned and rebelled—has provided the Atonement, so that there remaineth now no more sacrifice on our part for sin. When we ask how He has done this, we come to the great fact which is the primal wonder of the Christian Gospel, the fact of what is called the Incarnation—God manifest in the flesh—the essential meaning of which has been expressed by the poet thus :

> "He sent no angel to our race
> Of higher or of lower place :
> But wore the robe of human frame
> Himself, and to this lost world came."

Or, in the more adequate words of St. Paul[1] : "When the fulness of the time came," that is, at the end of a long process of development

[1] Gal. iv. 4.

or preparation, a preparation or development directly in the history of Israel, but indirectly in religious history outside Israel, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, that He might redeem" a sinful world; sent Him forth from His eternal presence and glory, Very God of Very God, not simply to take upon Him our human nature as a "robe" or vesture, but to become one with humanity, becoming born into this sinful world of ours a little child, and growing up through childhood to boyhood and then to manhood, that thus born and thus growing up, very man of very man, He might in our human nature, and from within humanity, offer the sacrifice well pleasing to God for our redemption, and thus knit up the rupture and bind back God's world again to Him.

The chief work of the latter half of the nineteenth century—of the last sixty or seventy years—has been the re-emphasising of the genuine historical humanity of Jesus, and with that the re-discovery of the wonder of the Incarnation, of true God becoming true man. The full results of this great re-

discovery we have not yet entered truly into. But, with all the great services which it has done, and has still to do, this recent almost concentrated emphasis on the Incarnation, has been apt to call attention off too much from the great fact in which the Incarnation issued, and in which the significance of the life is uniformly represented in the New Testament as alone having its true consummation or completion, namely, the Death on the Cross. To the New Testament writers, both of the Gospels and the Epistles, the Death was the predominant fact, the fact of central importance in the manifestation of Jesus Christ. This is reflected even in the proportion of space given in the Gospel records to the story of the last week of our Lord's earthly ministry, what is called the Passion Week. Taking an ordinary Bible, what do we find? Out of thirty pages of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, ten are given to the record of the last week. In St. Mark, out of nineteen pages, six are given. In St. Luke's Gospel, the proportion is a little less, but in St. John it is more. Out of twenty-four pages taken

up there with the whole story, ten are concerned with the last few days. Not only so, there are ample indications that in Jesus' own thought His death held a corresponding place as the fact of supreme importance and significance, the great fact and act of His life. Most of us, I dare say, have seen Holman Hunt's famous picture entitled "The Shadow of the Cross." The picture represents the interior of the carpenter's workshop in Nazareth, with Joseph and the Boy Jesus at work. The Boy pauses for a moment's rest from His work, and as He stretches Himself in the doorway, the shadow of a cross is thrown by the sun on the wall behind. The picture may be fanciful in form, but the underlying idea is true to the facts. We cannot read the Gospels with any degree of attention without observing how from an early stage in His life, at the very latest from the beginning of His public ministry, the thought of His death was ever present to His mind as involved in His business or "vocation" here on earth, as the culmination or concentration of it, indeed, the thing for which above all He came into the

world. This great fact, and the meaning of it, is what we are to consider together now.

And first, and to begin with, let us remind ourselves that in dealing with the death of Jesus, we are dealing with a veritably historical fact, not a legend, but something that actually happened, a fact of human earthly history. This it is needful to say at the outset, for in the religions of the pagan world we come across legends of gods who came to this world and died,—Attis, Adonis, Osiris, and others,—and sometimes the case is represented as if the New Testament story of the death of Jesus has been shown by the comparative study of religions to be on a level with, and indeed a reflection of, these conceptions or ideas which were prevalent in the Græco-Roman world when Christianity came upon the scene. The cases, however, are altogether different. Attis, Adonis, Osiris, and the others are in no sense historical figures, and the legends of their coming to earth, and dying, and rising again, are but figurative embodiments of the birth, decay, and reanimation of nature year by

year. But, in the case of the death of Jesus, we are face to face with a plain, human, historical fact. "Christus was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius." Where do we read this? We read it in the records of the Roman historian Tacitus.[1] The death of Jesus, that is to say, is a fact of human history, a fact of Roman history, recorded as such in the Roman historical books.

Now, viewed thus, it was looked upon as the death of "a criminal,"[2] of one who died not of old age, or of disease, or by accident, but of one who was put to death, and that the most violent and criminal death, in the prime of life, while still a young man. This is all we can say of the death of Jesus from the point of view of pure secular history. We may say His murder was unjust. Lawyers acknowledge this; no two witnesses, the records tell us, could be found to agree together as to the charge brought against Him. Pilate declared that he found no fault in Him, and even Herod had not a word to

[1] *Annals*, xv. c. 45 (Bohn's trans., p. 423). [2] *Ibid.*

say against Him. We may even say His death was a martyrdom, the highest or noblest instance in human history of a man who faced death itself rather than compromise with truth and righteousness. That, at most, is all we can say from this point of view. But, when we come to the Gospels and the Epistles, how differently the death is looked upon here! What a wide divergence, what a gulf even, there is between the point of view of Tacitus and the point of view of the Gospels or the Epistles. Here the death is looked upon, not as the death of a criminal, not merely as an unjust murder, not even as a martyrdom, but as something very much more than that. It is represented as a fact of Divine history and significance. God Himself was in that fact, and in it in a unique way. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." "Having made peace through the blood of His Cross, through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself."[1] The fact, that is to say, is looked upon as the supreme

[1] 2 Cor. v. 19; Col. i. 20.

revelation of the love of God to a sinful world; the fact through which, above all, we have the Atonement, in such a way that the Gospel is concentrated in it, and the gospel which we are called to preach is not merely the gospel of the Incarnation—the gospel of the Life—but above all the Word of the Cross. "We preach Christ crucified, . . . the power of God, and the wisdom of God."[1] And the question we have to ask ourselves is this, how such a death, a death which, looked at from the purely secular historical point of view is a murder, at most a martyr's death, could come to be represented as a fact of religious history and significance like that?

Now the best way, I think, and the simplest way, in approaching an answer, will be to start from the oldest statement of the case, namely, the Apostolic interpretation and explanation. This finds various expression, but the truth expressed is the same. "Christ died for our sins." "Christ hath suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God." "He is the propitiation for

[1] 1 Cor. i. 23 f.

our sins." "Our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ." "In whom we have our redemption through His blood."[1] This is the uniform Apostolic representation and interpretation of the fact. Sometimes it is spoken of as if it were Paul's peculiar doctrine, and no doubt it is in Paul that we have the fullest and the clearest and the most developed statement of it; but it is the teaching equally of Peter and John and all the Apostles. Moreover, it is in line with Jesus' own interpretation. Sometimes it is said to-day, indeed it is very often said to-day, that the Apostles gave a new emphasis to the death of Jesus, an emphasis which He Himself did not give, and that to this extent they distorted His teaching. So we have, for example, the common contrast between what is called the "gospel of Jesus" and the "gospel of Christ"; and Paul in particular is spoken of as "the founder of Christianity as a gospel of Redemption." Now, there is, indeed, less perhaps than we might have expected of explicit teaching

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 John ii. 2; 1 Cor. v. 7; Eph. i. 7.

from Jesus Himself as to the meaning of His death, so far as our records go. And the explanation of this is sometimes stated in this way: that "Jesus came not to preach the gospel, but that there might be a gospel to preach." And that is very true. But let us remember also, what is so clearly reflected in the Gospels themselves, namely, the utter inability of the disciples to understand the significance of their Master's death. Not only were they unable to grasp its meaning, they refused even to believe that it could ever happen. And so Jesus had to say to them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."[1] It was only after the Death, through the interpretation of the Spirit succeeding on the Resurrection and Ascension, that the meaning of the fact came to be understood by them. Jesus in the very nature of the case, therefore, was limited or restricted in His teaching of His disciples in regard to His death. He had to accommo-

[1] John xvi. 12 f.

date His teaching to their state of mind. And yet, with all that, there are at least two great occasions recorded in the Gospels on which our Lord plainly indicated the sacrificial or atoning character of His death. One was when the disciples were quarrelling about precedence in the Kingdom, and Jesus said unto them: "Whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 44 f.). The other occasion was at the Last Supper, when, on the night before the Cross, He made His crowning attempt to lead them to understand the meaning of the great fact of the morrow. Taking the cup, we are told, He said, "This is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many."[1] The "new covenant" established in the death of Jesus—that was just the restored bond, the union between God and man reconstituted on the basis of our Lord's sacrifice for sin. In both cases Jesus Himself plainly indicated

[1] Mark xiv. 24; Matt. xxvi. 28.

that His death would possess a sacrificial, atoning or propitiatory efficacy. "Sacrifice," "Propitiation," "Passover," "Ransom,"—such, then, is the circle of ideas used in the New Testament, both by the Apostles and by Jesus Himself, to explain or represent the central significance of the Death on the Cross.

Now, to-day, it is often said that these are ancient or primitive ideas. To speak of the death of Jesus as a "sacrifice" or a "propitiation" is, it is said, to use ideas or figures borrowed from Old Testament ritual, and thus to run New Testament thought into Old Testament moulds. To connect the death of Jesus with the sacrificial ritual of the Old Testament, that, it is represented, may have been natural enough for a Jew, but for us to-day it is old-time and obsolete. Now, we may admit that sometimes too close a parallel is attempted to be drawn between the details of the Old Testament ritual and the death of Jesus. Though, let it be said, if we believe the Old Testament to be a preparation for the New, then we may well hold that the Old Testament ritual was itself

meant to be a preparation for the understanding of Christ and His saving work. But let us get behind forms and figures and ritual, to the facts on which the interpretation is based. As we saw in the previous lecture, sacrifice is a universal fact, a phenomenon of the religious history, not of Israel only, but of every people. And the deepest and the truest element in sacrifice we saw to be, not merely the expression of man's sense of dependence on and gratitude to God, but the feeling of the dis-union or dis-harmony between the human and the Divine, and the consequent need for making propitiation or reconciliation of some sort. The practice of sacrifice, that is to say, is the testimony of history to man's universal sense of the fatal rupture, a rupture for which he is responsible, and therefore guilty, and for which he feels some atonement or reconciliation necessary. It is this need, the deepest need of man everywhere and always, that is claimed to be satisfied, and alone adequately and for ever satisfied, by the death of Jesus. And this it is that is the essential

and abiding truth behind the view of Christ's death as sacrificial or atoning.

Now, to explain how Christ's death accomplished this atonement, and the necessity of His death for atonement, this brings us to the consideration of what are called "theories of the Atonement." We cannot here enter into these in detail. Let it suffice for the present to say that, many and varied as these theories have been and are, they divide themselves into two great classes. They range themselves on either side of one great dividing line. On the one side, we have that class of theory which finds the chief atoning efficacy of the death of Jesus to consist in its influence on man, and on man's attitude to God. On the other, we have those theories which, while recognising the element of truth in this class of theory, lay stress rather on the influence of Jesus' death on God, and on God's attitude to man. The former, which emphasise the manward aspect, are called "subjective" theories of the Atonement; the latter, which lay stress on the Godward aspect, are called "objective" theories of the Atonement.

To refer to these briefly, and to take the former first,—the "subjective" theories of the Atonement. These theories find the atoning efficacy of the death of Christ to lie chiefly in the fact that there we have the manifestation or demonstration, the supreme manifestation or demonstration, of the love of God to a sinful world—the proof that God still loves and cares for man, even in his sin, and seeks his holy welfare. In the life and in the teaching of Jesus, we have the first revelation of this fact of God's holy love suffering because of sin and yearning over the sinner. But it is in the Cross we have the supreme manifestation or demonstration of it. For here we see the length to which God's suffering love will go in seeking to convince man of His reconciling will, and, as such, the death of Jesus is fitted to make to man a commanding moral appeal to lead him to repentance and new obedience. The chief efficacy of the death lies, that is to say, in the moral influence it is calculated to have on man in the way of reconciling him to God. So these theories are sometimes

called by the general name of "moral influence" theories.

Now, let us recognise the great element of truth for which this class of theory stands. It conserves evangelical truths which the other class of theory has often tended to do less than justice to. This truth to begin with, that Christ is not to be conceived as coming in between an angry God and a sinful world, and by His suffering and death appeasing an else irreconcilable God. Christ's death has sometimes been represented in that fashion, as "softening the heart of the judge,"[1] as if it was Christ's sacrifice that evoked God's love to man, and made Him willing to be reconciled. That is an altogether unscriptural representation. The uniform New Testament view is, that it is God's Fatherly Love that is the primal spring and source of the Atonement. The atoning work began on the Father's side. God the Father loved, and so provided the Atonement. The work of redemption is the revelation of the self-sacrifice of the Father who "spared not His

[1] So Mozley in *University Sermons*, p. 168 ff.

own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." As Jesus Himself said, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son."[1] This great foundational truth of the New Testament this class of theory conserves. And also this further truth, that, if we are to do justice to the atoning efficacy of Christ's death, the death must be viewed in close organic connexion with the life. The suffering and sacrifice of the death was but the culmination and consummation of the suffering and sacrifice of the life, and as such only, as the death of such a life, had it atoning efficacy. The tendency of evangelical Protestantism, we fear it must be confessed, has been to give too exclusive attention to the death of Christ out of this organic connexion with the personality and the life.

But, with all this truth, the question remains, is this an adequate or sufficient explanation or representation of the atoning efficacy of the Cross? True so far, with a great element of truth, is it the full truth, is it the deepest truth? The question, it seems

[1] John iii. 16.

to us, cannot but be raised: If this is all, and if this is the deepest element in the atoning work—the influence, namely, of the Death on the mind of man, an appeal to him to be reconciled to God because of this supreme demonstration of God's suffering love—how could Christ's death show God's love? If we may take a homely illustration which, we hope, will not be considered irreverent. Suppose that, in crossing the Atlantic, some fellow-passenger comes to me on deck and says: "I have a great friendship for you, and, to prove the genuineness of my friendship, I am to cast myself overboard into the sea and be drowned." How, we ask, could such an act prove that person's friendship for me? Would it not seem an altogether arbitrary, even a suicidal, act? But suppose, on the other hand, that by accident I fell overboard and was in danger of being drowned, and that then my friend cast himself overboard to save me, that were an altogether different situation. There would be a connexion then between his act and his

friendship. The only suffering, that is to say, that can truly reveal or demonstrate love is that which is necessarily involved in love's purposes. There must be some necessity, some "needs be," about the act, else it can appear only gratuitous. And what we feel about the merely subjective theories of the Atonement is, that by themselves alone they do not satisfy this elementary demand of our moral reason. More than that, however, they are not adequate to Jesus' own representation of the case. His death, in His own view, was not an accidental fact. "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be killed,"[1] He said. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but have eternal life."[2] There was to His own mind, that is to say, a necessity about His death. This necessity was no mere outward compulsion. In that sense it was voluntary. Did He not say, "I lay down My life of Myself: no one taketh it away from Me"?[3]

[1] Mark viii. 31. [2] John iii. 14 f. [3] John x. 18.

"Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"[1] *Passus quia Ipse voluit.* The necessity or "needs be" of His death was an inward objective necessity as represented by Christ Himself, especially in His sayings, referred to above, about the "ransom for many" and "the blood of the new covenant." Like the sufferings of "the Servant of the Lord" in the Old Testament evangelical prophet, His sufferings and death were expiatory, or propitiatory. Indeed it is significant to note that there are indications that it was this very prophecy of the Servant of Jehovah, who saved by suffering for his people, as depicted in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which He knew Himself to be fulfilling in His death. The necessity of His death, this means, was a necessity that was not merely manward but Godward. It was involved in His "vocation" of restoring man to reconciled saving

[1] Matt. xxvi. 53 f.

fellowship with God. What this necessity was, we may not be able to define with any great exactitude. But, at least, we can see the direction in which it lay. It was the outcome of the absolute righteousness of God—that righteousness which is no abstract law, but His very nature and character. God being Who and What He was and is—He in whom the moral order and the moral purposes of the universe are constituted—His forgiveness could be granted, and can be granted, to sinful man only on such terms as should uphold and vindicate His own holiness and ensure ours. This means, God's forgiveness is not a forgiveness lightly to be presumed upon, as if sin could simply be passed over. He can bestow His forgiveness on sinful man only in such a way as shall vindicate the righteous order violated by sin, and shall at the same time induce true penitence and moral amendment on the part of the sinner. And Jesus, by the suffering and sacrifice of His life culminating in His death, satisfied this twofold requirement. As Paul puts it, in a striking passage, "Whom

God hath set forth to be a propitiation . . . for the shewing of His righteousness; that He might be righteous Himself, and accept as righteous him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25 f.). The atoning efficacy of Christ's death on the Cross lay, accordingly, in the influence it had not merely on man's attitude to God, but, first and foremost, on God's attitude to man. This is the inalienable truth for which the so-called "objective" theories of the Atonement stand—the truth which we must maintain and conserve at all costs, if we are to do right at once by Jesus' own representation and that of the whole New Testament, and by the demands of the morally awakened conscience.

Now the objection has sometimes been raised that this "objective," or, as it is often called, "substitutionary" view of the Atonement is, in the very nature of the case, immoral. It is contrary to our moral sense —so it is sometimes represented—to suppose that one could suffer in this way for another, and so let that other off the due reward of his

or her wrong-doing. And we must frankly confess that this objection does seem to us to be valid against certain statements of the theory, for example against the Reformation doctrine of Substitution. If Jesus be but one more in the race, one individual suffering for other individuals, we do not see how the objection is to be answered. But if He be such an One as He claimed to be, the "Son of Man" Himself, not one man more in human history, but He in Whom humanity itself is summed up and represented, and, as such, One who is not an outsider to any man, then the objection falls. For then His vicarious suffering is a case not of simple substitution, of mere *quid pro quo*, but rather of identification. As "Son of Man," the "Second Adam," the eternal Son, He could identify Himself with sinful humanity, and did identify Himself, in such a way as to "say Amen from within humanity," to the condemnation of God on sin, and suffer all that this involved. The place of such vicarious suffering—the suffering that comes from identification—as a

factor in the moral development of the race and the moral order of the world, evolution has shown us more clearly than ever ; the father, for example, suffering in and for his son, or the mother for her child. There is nothing arbitrary about such suffering. It is the necessary outcome of the organic constitution of the human race. And Christ's vicarious suffering is but the highest instance or illustration of this law of the organic moral order. For being such an One as He was, He could come, and did come in His Incarnation, into such relation to the human race as to be more utterly identified with it than even a father can be with his son, or a mother with her child. What this identification of Christ with sinful man in His life, and above all in His death, involved —all that it involved—we cannot tell. We would need to be God Himself to tell that. The mystery, the unfathomable mystery, of the suffering of Christ involved in His redemptive work is impressed upon us, especially as we read the story of the agony in Gethsemane, with its complex of sorrow

and conflict and submission, and then as we ponder His cry on the Cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—this coming at the end of His wonderful life of holy fellowship and perfect faith and obedience. We feel that here we are in the presence of something altogether different—different, indeed, by the whole diameter of difference—from ordinary human suffering and death. It was, let it be said, not merely the physical sufferings of His passion and death on the Cross that led to that agony and conflict. These were not of the essence of the case; these were not His chief or deepest sufferings. It was the inner agonies of the holy soul of Jesus in the last great concentrated grapple with the consequences of man's sin; in His work of making Atonement and reconciling us to God, enduring the final judgment of Holy Love upon sin, and going through an experience which was felt to be in some real sense a forsakenness even by God Himself. It was not that God was angry with Jesus; never, we may well believe, was the Son dearer to the Father than at that

moment when in perfect filial obedience He drank "the cup" of God's judgment on sin to its bitterest drop. But so utterly did He identify Himself with sinful humanity that, in the work of making Atonement, He suffered the full condemnation of God on sin, even unto the sense of desertion or dereliction by God Himself. This is an awful thing to say, the very essence of awfulness; but it is this that is the measure at once of the sin of man, and of the love of God that would redeem, even at such a cost, a world of sin. For this was a sense of forsakenness and desolation which He experienced, in some way which we may not understand but yet cannot dismiss, in order that it may never have to be ours. In Mrs. Browning's striking and solemnizing words :[1]

"Yea once Immanuel's orphaned cry, His universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'
It went up from the Holy's lips amid His lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation."

[1] In "Ode on Cowper's Grave."

It cost God that, it cost Christ that, to knit up the rupture caused by sin and thus make possible the fulfilment of His chief end and aim in the whole evolutionary process. And the only fit attitude on our part, in relation to it, is the attitude of adoring wonder and whole-hearted surrender :

> "Love so amazing, so Divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all."

LECTURE IV

THE ATONEMENT AND LIFE IN THE RISEN CHRIST

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In last lecture we were considering that essentially unfathomable fact, the death of Jesus on the Cross—the concentrated meeting-place of God's love and man's sin. That death, considered not in itself alone but as the culmination of a life of perfect obedience and the consummation of the incarnate sacrifice, the New Testament uniformly represents as the great means of atonement. "In Whom we have our redemption through His blood."[1]

Now this atoning suffering and sacrifice concentrated in His death is never represented in the New Testament as the end of Christ's redeeming work. Just as we saw how the Incarnation is looked upon as

[1] Eph. i. 7.

pointing forward to, and as consummated in, the Crucifixion and Death, so the Crucifixion or Death is looked upon as pointing forward to, and as consummated only in, something beyond itself, namely, the Resurrection and Exaltation. Nothing indeed is at once plainer and more striking to careful students of the New Testament, than to note how uniformly the Resurrection and Exaltation are looked upon as the end and aim of the whole atoning process, the key by which alone the meaning of Christ's life and death is clearly seen. So much so that, according to the New Testament, it is only as we know the Risen Christ, only as we know Jesus in the power of His Resurrection, that we rightly understand the significance of His life and death here on earth. The crucial fact, indeed, of the Christian religion, the fact of most strategical importance for the whole conception of the Christian gospel, is represented as being the Resurrection. So it is, for example, and most strikingly of all, by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. There he takes the supposition or hypothesis, "If Christ is not risen," and by showing the

consequences of that supposition, after the manner of the *reductio ad absurdum* argument, he illustrates the essential necessity of the Resurrection for the Christian faith. He traces the catastrophe that overtakes the gospel of the Incarnation and the Cross, of the Life and the Death, if Christ be not risen : the great threefold desolation or inanity of an Incarnation and Crucifixion uncrowned by the Resurrection.

First, "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain (*κενόν*)" (v. 14). It is empty, inane. It is evacuated of all reality ; there is nothing in it, no power, no virtue.

Second, "If Christ hath not been raised . . . your faith also is vain (*ματαία*)" (v. 14). It is futile, ineffectual, or to no purpose. The Christian gospel is of no avail, it is frustrate, or null and void. If Christ hath not been raised, the reconciliation to God which we supposed we had in Him is an illusion. "Ye are yet in your sins" (v. 17), unforgiven and unrenewed.

And *third*, another consequence. "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have

perished" (v. 18). Our assurance of deliverance from death and the grave is gone, the assurance of a life in God that reaches out beyond the present is for ever shattered, if the Resurrection of Jesus is not an accomplished fact. The Resurrection of Jesus, that is to say, with all that it involves, according to the New Testament representation lies at the very heart of the Christian religion. It is in truth the most essential and determinative inclusive fact of the Christian gospel, so that if it remains the Gospel remains, if it goes all else goes.

Now, to say this may seem somewhat of an exaggeration to us to-day who have, we fear it must be confessed, somewhat lost the New Testament perspective in our thought in this respect. The Church's emphasis is on the Cross, on the Death,—not that it can ever lay too much stress on this—, but on the Cross and Death apart from, and out of vital organic connexion with, the Resurrection. So that we have to ask ourselves, how, or why, is this centrally determinative place given to the Resurrection in Apostolic thought and life? The answer is twofold.

First. As a matter of history, it was the Resurrection that authenticated Jesus as the Christ to the Apostles and early disciples, and because of this authentication, and only because of it, gave rise to the Christian Church. Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, and had foretold that He would lay down His life as a "ransom" or sacrifice for man's redemption. The disciples, however, did not understand a prediction which appeared only foolishness to them, so contrary was the thought of His death to their conceptions and expectations. They paid no heed to the prediction except to cast it from them as impossible. And as a matter of historical fact, when the Death did take place, and such a Death, it quenched their hopes and plunged them in despair, even if it left their love still clinging to the fond remembrance of Him. "We hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel."[1] But the death and burial had laid that hope low in the dust; and the enemies of Jesus seemed to have triumphed. The prophet, "mighty in deed

[1] Luke xxiv. 21.

and word," was, it would seem, no longer a force but a discredited failure. It was only when the certainty of His Resurrection and triumph over death was proclaimed by the fact of the empty grave and His subsequent appearances to them, that their confidence and courage revived. The Resurrection was to them the Divine confirmation or attestation of the truth of His Divine Sonship and mission. "Declared to be" (*i.e.* marked out, or vindicated, by God to be) "the Son of God with power by the Resurrection."[1] It was the reversal of the impression made by the death and the burial. It made evident to them that the very power of God, the power which creates and sustains the world and life, was on His side. More than that, it was not only the proof or evidence to them of the reality of His Divine Sonship and mission ("Messiahship"), it was the proof also of the effectiveness of that sacrifice for sin which He claimed to consummate on the Cross. It was the Father's seal on Christ's atoning work, and the proof

[1] Rom. i. 4.

of its acceptance. This great twofold attestation or authentication is what is meant by saying that the Resurrection had an evidential or attestatory significance. It was the Resurrection that truly convinced the disciples that Jesus was indeed the Christ, and that His death on the Cross was not a catastrophe but a fact of Divine significance, a sacrifice well pleasing unto God for man's redemption. As thus evidential or attestatory it was the belief in the Resurrection—this, added to the remembrance of His life and teaching, not without it — that set their lives on a new basis of confidence and faith in their Master as Lord and Christ, and sent the disciples forth to declare a Gospel centring in the Cross.

But, *secondly*, the Resurrection for the Apostles was primary or strategical, not merely as thus evidential or attestatory, but further as itself an essential constitutive part of Christ's work of salvation. The Resurrection is not simply an external seal or evidential appendage, something added on at the end to give evidence of Christ's Divine

mission and atoning work. It is itself an integral and essential part of His redemptive activity. It is necessary for the completion, consummation or full realisation, of the ends of Christ's atoning life and death. And that in this way. The Gospel is not simply a message of mercy, of forgiveness of guilt and the passing over of judgment. This is too negative and inadequate a way of conceiving of the end of Christ's atoning work. As we saw in the previous lecture, God, being Who and What He is, can grant forgiveness to sinful man only on such terms as shall not only do right by His own holiness but ensure ours. Evangelical Protestantism, following the theology of the Reformation, has, it must be confessed, been too apt to find the vital centre of the Christian Gospel in pardon or reconciliation merely, leaving the whole Gospel emphasis there. Pardon, indeed, is an important part, a fundamentally important part, of the Christian Gospel. But, as one of England's greatest preachers has said: "Our Christianity will be a most superficial thing, and may easily tend to

become a minister of unrighteousness, and not of righteousness, unless we keep clearly in view that pardon or forgiveness is but a means to an end, and that the end is that we should 'walk not after the flesh but after the spirit,' or, to put it in more modern words, not that we should be forgiven men but that, being forgiven, we should be good."[1] The purpose of Christ's atoning sacrifice was to "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works."[2] His death for us accordingly—His death, that is to say, viewed as the consummation and concentration of the atoning sacrifice of His life—was not the end of Christ's work, but only a means to an end beyond itself for which it was the necessary basis or foundation. This end is the working out in us of a new life of holy and filial obedience to the Father, thus bringing us into true fellowship with God. And it was not until the Resurrection, and Ascension and Exaltation, that this could be

[1] Maclaren of Manchester. See *Last Sheaves*, p. 224.
[2] Tit. ii. 14.

accomplished, when the crucified Jesus, the Christ of God, became the living and life-giving Lord. As Paul has it: "If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life."[1] That is to say, without the Resurrection the whole atoning life and death would be ineffective; the great end for which Jesus lived and died here upon earth would fail of realisation. Thus it is that only in relation to this Living Saviour have we even forgiveness. Our salvation, in its every part, depends not simply on what Christ was and did in the past, but even more on what He is and does in the present. "It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God."[2] The Christian life through and through is a life of fellowship with a Risen, Living Lord, in which fellowship alone we have forgiveness and every spiritual blessing, and are enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Christ identified

[1] Rom. v. 10. [2] Rom. viii. 34.

Himself with us in His life and death, that we might be identified with Him in the power of His Resurrection. And so the New Testament definition of a Christian is just "a man in Christ" (2 Cor. xii. 2). ἐν Χριστῷ. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the most important single phrase in the whole New Testament. An eminent living German scholar has traced one hundred and sixty-four instances of this formula, or its equivalent, in St. Paul's Epistles alone.[1] But the importance of the phrase is not to be estimated even by the number of times it is explicitly used in the Apostolic writings. "In Christ" or "in Christ Jesus,"—that is, in the redemptive or life-giving atmosphere of the presence and power of the crucified but now Living Lord and Saviour,—this is the key-thought of all the Epistles. He who surrenders himself to the Risen Christ, and by faith comes into relation with His saving Life, crosses the great divide—the divide that separates a state of condemnation and sin

[1] A. Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu,"* p. 1.

from a state of justification and progressive holiness. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."[1] "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature,"[2] a new creation, a new phenomenon. So Paul was always saying to his converts, "Walk in Him," take your life's stride in Him as your blood-bought inheritance, and then "ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." All which means, that it is "in Christ" and in the power of the Resurrection that the Church lives and moves and has its being. The whole round of Christian life and experience is lived in this element. The Resurrection is not merely the evidence or attestation of the Divine mission of Jesus and of the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice, it is also an essential constitutive part of Christ's redemptive work, that indeed for the sake of which all else was undergone. And, as such, the Resurrection (with all that it involved and issued in) is not only as a matter of history the cause of the Church's coming into existence at the first, but is also as a matter of experience the con-

[1] Rom. viii. 1. [2] 2 Cor. v. 17.

dition of the Church's continuing to exist and make progress in the world.

Now, that the Resurrection has this place of vital and pivotal importance in the Christian religion has always been recognised, not by the friends of Christianity only, but also by her foes. And so in all ages this has been the storm-centre of the fight for the Christian faith. The various attempts put forward in the past history of the struggle, by opponents of the essential Christian gospel, to explain away the fact, and the Apostles' belief in the fact, we need not here consider. Many of these theories may be taken as finally and for ever discredited—discredited by the modern historical sense for reality and conscience for facts, which the Germans expressively term "Wirklichkeitssinn." At the present time the attempt to account for the belief is being made from several sides. From the side of Comparative Religion and Mythology, for example, it consists in the endeavour to relate the Resurrection story of the Gospels to the legends in pagan religions of the death and resurrection of

mythical figures like Attis, Adonis, Osiris, and others. This might be called the "genealogical" method of explaining the Resurrection story—a method of which this at least must be said, that it does less than justice to the Evangelic facts. Not to dwell in detail, however, even on the various current attempts to minimise the Resurrection, let it suffice for the present to refer more particularly to what is probably the most fashionable way in our day of regarding the fact, namely, that which looks upon it as purely spiritual. The aim is to get rid of the necessity of admitting anything like a bodily resurrection, which is an inconvenient fact for those who, from their presuppositions, fight shy of the supernatural, in any specific sense, in Christianity. It is said that all we need for our Christian faith is belief in a living, spiritual Lord, and that belief in the resurrection of Jesus' body is no vital or essential part of the Christian Gospel. Here, for example, is how one of the most brilliant of the younger theologians in Germany to-day puts it: "It is not Jesus

as historically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it."[1] The question of whether the historical Jesus actually rose from the grave is treated as a matter of, at most, secondary importance for a true spiritual Christian faith. So the distinction has been drawn by Harnack[2] between what he calls "the Easter faith" and "the Easter message." He bids us hold by "the Easter faith" that Jesus Christ has passed through death, that God has awakened Him to life and glory, but warns us against basing this faith on "the Easter message" of the empty grave and the bodily appearances of Jesus to His disciples after the Resurrection. By upholders of this view it is generally maintained that Paul at least, however it may have been with the earlier Apostles, never believed in the resurrection of the actual body of Jesus. He believed rather, they maintain, that it was in a spiritual form that Jesus appeared

[1] Schweitzer in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 399.

[2] In *What is Christianity?* pp. 160–3.

to the disciples to assure them of His victory over death.

Now, no doubt, the body in which the Risen Jesus appeared was different from the earthly physical body. It was the same, and yet not the same. There in the hands was the print of the nails, and in the side the mark of the spear. The risen body could be seen, and touched ; it could even partake of food. And yet it was not the same. The risen body could pass through a closed sepulchre and through shut doors. It could be present in different and distant places at short intervals. It could appear suddenly, and as suddenly disappear. It was so changed, it would seem, that the mere external form and features often failed to disclose who it was ; so changed into "another form"[1] that Paul described it as a "spiritual" body. This certainly is Paul's view, and this is in line with the uniform Evangelic account of the post-Resurrection appearances. But this is very different from the view of the theory in question. On that theory the earthly body

[1] ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ (Mark xvi. 12).

was not merely changed, it was dropped and lost. It was left behind in Joseph's grave to see corruption. The latest turn given to this attempt to conserve a spiritual Resurrection, while making the physical or bodily Resurrection unessential, is that of those who, like Professor Lake of Leiden, or Sir Oliver Lodge of Birmingham, seek to bring the fact into line with the phenomena of Psychical Research. But whatever form the theory of a purely spiritual Resurrection may take, to every form of this theory there is one great and fatal objection. That objection is this. Within a few weeks of the Crucifixion Peter and others were preaching in Jerusalem, and making multitudes of converts, and the burden of their message was: "This Jesus whom ye crucified, God raised up on the third day." As all admit, it was this belief in the bodily Resurrection of Jesus on the third day that gave rise to the Apostles' faith. Now, if the body was actually left behind in the grave, why did not the Jewish and Roman authorities silence the disciples by producing the body of Jesus,

and so destroy the new movement in its bud? What could have been at once easier and more effective? One of the greatest impostures of recent times in England was so destroyed. The Druce mystery was solved by a simple examination of the grave in just this way. And if the appearances of Jesus were purely spiritual—a kind of wireless telegraphy—while His body was still in Joseph's tomb, why did not the Sanhedrin and the Roman authorities produce it, and so for ever give the lie to what the Apostles preached? The body, as medical men acknowledge, must have been recognisable as such for at least three or four weeks after the Crucifixion. This is an insuperable objection to every form of theory that denies the bodily Resurrection. As it has been said, "The silence of the Jews is as significant as the speech of the Christians."[1]

Not to dwell further, however, on these present-day attempts to explain away the Resurrection—attempts which, let it be said, are the outcome, not of the evidence or of any

[1] Fairbairn, *Studies on the Life of Christ*, p. 357.

supposed defect in the evidence, such as the alleged discrepancies in the narratives, but of the presuppositions with which men have come to the evidence, presuppositions which centre round objections to the recognition of the supernatural in any specific or unique sense in Christianity, and which work out to a view of Jesus less than that of Christian faith—what we wish to do, in the concluding words of this final lecture, is to point out the chief abiding practical significance of this faith in a Risen, Living Christ. As the entrance of our Saviour on His full redemptive life of risen, exalted, and enthroned activity at God's right hand, through which He gives effect to the redemption achieved on earth by His atoning life and death, the Resurrection, with the Ascension and Exaltation which it involved, is the beginning of a new era for humanity, a new departure in the history of the world. We know what a new epoch is created by the discovery, and entry into practical experience, of a new physical force. Think, for example, of one of the last, greatest, and most wonderful discoveries of

science—that of radium. This has proved to be a discovery of nothing less than revolutionary significance, transfiguring and transforming not only the world of practice but our whole conception of nature's working. Now, if this is so in the case of the entry into human experience of a physical force, what may we not expect in the case of such a new spiritual force as that which Paul, in speaking of Jesus, designates "the power of His resurrection"? Here we have the introduction into human life and history of a new power for redemptive ends, their experience of the effects of which the early Christians felt they could only describe aright in such terms as these: "We know that we have passed from death unto life," "risen with Christ into newness of life," "alive from dead works to serve the living God." Assuredly a new spiritual force or reality this, which is calculated to transfigure or transform everything in human experience. Everything, first, in the world of our moral and spiritual experience. Every fresh con-

version, every fresh aspiration, every fresh victory of the higher over the lower, whether in the life of individuals or of nations, is part of the working of the Risen Christ, part of the great increasing cumulative evidence of the new creative epoch introduced by the Resurrection. Not only so, it affects the whole round of our conception of things, creating a new intellectual perspective. Everything is now seen *sub specie Christi*, in the light of Christ and His resurrection, and, judged by that revealing and interpreting light, all things become new. All things become new in the world about us. A new heaven and a new earth encompass us. As one has said, writing out of a glad experience of this transformation :

> "Heaven above is softer blue;
> Earth around is sweeter green;
> Something lives in every hue,
> Christless lives have never seen;
> Birds with gladder songs o'erflow,
> Flowers with deeper beauties shine;
> Since I know, as now I know,
> I am His, and He is mine."

Not only in the world around us do all things thus become new, but also in the world within, in the world of individual history and providence. In the Resurrection we see, as at the great critical or crucial moment of the world's moral history, that "all things work together for good," that there is but one Lordship in providence and moral experience, that the God of history and the God of conscience are one. In the Resurrection we have also the great guarantee that the material order will in the end subserve the purpose of spirit. For there we have the pledge that our mortal bodies shall be quickened like unto the body of His glory, body as well as soul having its place in the renewed Kingdom of God, "the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." In a word, in Christ and His resurrection we have the earnest, as well as the ground, of the consummation of the whole purpose of God for the world.

Thus viewed and thus related the whole creation will come to its own, through the

end of the chain as constituted in human personality being restored to its element and home in God through Christ. All things will be "gathered together in Him," and the great consummation of God's purposes for the world will be accomplished. This great consummation or culmination is coming ever nearer. That it will surely come is the one greatest certainty of God's world, more sure than any so-called scientific certainty; and the great thing for each of us, the greatest thing that can come into any of our lives, is to have a part as fellow-workers with Christ, in our several places and relations, in bringing about the great fulfilment.

"God is working His purpose out
As year succeeds to year;
God is working His purpose out,
And the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the
glory of God
As the waters cover the sea."

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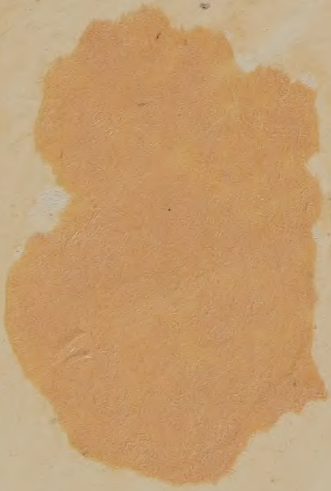

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